THE MONUMENT ON ZION HILL

SACHSE

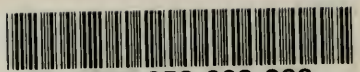
Dar.
F157
L2S12

LIBRARY

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

THIS BOOK IS THE GIFT OF

Buhl Foundation


3 1735 059 609 366

1008256

THE

MONUMENT ON ZION HILL.

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT

EPHRATA, LANCASTER COUNTY, PA.,

ON

PATRIOTS' DAY,

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 1895,

BY

JULIUS F. SACHSE,
LIFE MEMBER PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY,
MEMBER AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY
AND PENNSYLVANIA-GERMAN SOCIETY.

LANCASTER, PA.
THE NEW ERA BOOK AND JOB PRINT.
1895.

F157
L2S12
cop.1

6 A

ADDRESS.

In the Holy Writ there is to be found an injunction which commands one of the prophets of old to remove the shoes from off his feet, as the ground whereon he stood was holy ground.

If there is any plot of ground within the bounds of this great Commonwealth that deserves a similar appellation, and which should be trodden upon lightly and with reverence, it is the sod upon which we are here assembled.

Some of you may ask, What claims has this spot over the other battle-fields and the many like plots in our State where rest the patriots of our wars for indepenence and national existence?

It is true no great battle was ever fought upon this soil, no deeds of personal prowess were performed here in the heat of combat, nor did the sun ever set upon Mount Zion to shed its glow upon a scene of strife and carnage. On the contrary, the sloping hill and the fertile valley beyond, watered by the picturesque Cocalico, were always the scene of peace and piety. The booming of cannon, the rattle of musketry, the tread of armed legions, and the sharp word of command were unknown sounds within this quiet valley. The community which reigned here was a peaceful one, of the kind known as non-combatants, who, from religious principles, and not from fear and cowardice, refused to take an oath or bear arms.

The sounds that formerly broke the

stillness of the night air in this pastoral vale were the sweet strains of music from the combined choirs of the God-fearing men and women who once made their home here, and occupied the different buildings upon this tract, two of which, Bethania and Saron, still remain as mute reminders of the former Theosophic Community.

The chief buildings of the Society, "Kedar" and "Zion," that stood upon the slope of Zion Hill, not far from where we are assembled, and were the home of the Zionitic Brotherhood, where are they now? They are no more, and now we come to the point why this spot has greater claims upon us, as patriots, as Pennsylvanians, and Americans of German descent, than any of the numerous battlefields and cemeteries scattered throughout our State. Several hundred patriots of the Revolutionary war rest within the narrow bounds of this enclosure. Just how many here await the blast of the great trumpet, when all shall obey the call and arise to appear in final judgment, may perhaps never be known. The rude inscription placed over their common grave by Prior Jaebetz perhaps tells the tale better than any that could be devised. It merely reads: "Here rest the remains of many soldiers."

It is, however, not alone from the fact that these patriots sleep their last sleep under Ephrata's verdant sod that I adduce my claim for the sanctity of this spot, but from the fact that the pious men and women, call them religious enthusiasts if you will, not only gave up their homes and habitations at the re-

quest of the patriot authorities, and threw open the Community buildings and chapels for hospital purposes, but also acted as volunteer nurses for the sick and wounded.

To-day, one hundred and eighteen years ago, the battle of Brandywine was fought on Chester county's fruitful fields. It resulted, as you know, in the retreat of Washington, and decided the fate of Philadelphia. When the question arose that night at Chester what to do with the large number of sick and wounded soldiers, it was Washington who suggested sending at once all that would bear transportation to Ephrata. Why the Commander-in-Chief did this is easily explained. He knew the Prior Jaebetz personally, and was well satisfied of his devotion to the patriot cause. He also knew that the pious men and women here would tenderly care for the unfortunate patriots who were sent sick and maimed. No sooner was the order decided upon than means were taken to carry it out without delay. According to reliable tradition it was on the third day after the battle that the wagons began to arrive. They were not modern ambulances, but merely ordinary farm wagons without springs, in which the sufferers were laid on straw. In some cases the wagons were so arranged that there were two tiers of wounded, one above the other. It did not take long to fill both Kammers and Saal, as the stream of wagons seemed to be almost endless, and in less than a week Kedar and Zion were filled with hundreds of suffering patriots. The halls and corridors, which but a short time ago re-echoed the sweet

music of the choirs, as it alternated with the fervent prayers of the mystic Theosophist, were now filled with the groans of the sick and the moans of the dying. The devout Brotherhood no longer formed into nocturnal processions, chanting their mystic incantations to the divine Sophia, nor assembled at the matins in the Saal to salute the first rays of the sun as it flooded the Saal with its roseate light; but now as they noiselessly stepped from sufferer to sufferer, who occupied their rooms, they whispered words of hope to one, attended to the wants of others, and, when necessary, prayed with such as needed it. What is true of the Brotherhood is also true of the Sisters. Many a brave lad from a far-off province who lay here sick and wounded, and now rests here upon Zion Hill in an unknown grave, had his last moments cheered by one of the Sisterhood of Saron, who took a mother's place and soothed the dying moments of the young patriot. The whole story is one of self-denial and devotion in the interest of humanity.

To make matters still worse, shortly after the wounded soldiers were brought here, the malignant typhus or camp-fever broke out in both Kedar and Zion, a pestilence that carried away the soldiers as well as their attendants.

Now what was the course of these pious religious enthusiasts, whose property was so unceremoniously invaded, and whose whole domestic economy was destroyed for the time being? Did they object or protest? Did they for a moment remonstrate? No! They not only threw open their whole establishment, which then contained the largest buildings

within the State, and gave them for hospital purposes, but the Brothers and Sisters, though all well advanced in years, never flinched for a moment in their duty, even when certain death stared them in the face. During the whole time that the deadly fever raged in the Ephrata hospitals, and even the chief doctor fell a martyr to his zeal, it was the Ephrata Brotherhood and the Sisters who nursed the sick patriots, soothed their dying moments, and after all was over gave them a Christian burial here in the consecrated ground of Zion Hill.

The period in the struggle for Independence, from September, 1777, to September, 1778, is known as the "Fatal Year." The sufferings in the hospital department of the patriot army during that time were chiefly caused by a scarcity of funds and deficient supplies of all kinds. One of the surgeons who was active at both Bethlehem and Ephrata at that time subsequently states that "those were without exaggeration the darkest days of the Revolution."

History is silent as to the many acts of self-denial and charity of these God-fearing men and women while alleviating the pain and misery of the patriots. After years of careful search I have failed to find a single record of complaint from these humble heroes, or one setting forth any acccount of their losses or personal sufferings.

Doctor James Tilton, who visited the hospital here some time in 1777, tells us that not an orderly man or nurse in the hospital escaped an attack of the deadly fever, and but few of the surgeons. It is but just to state that these remarks ap-

plied to the general hospital at Bethlehem as well as Ephrata. Dr. Tilton continues: "Dr. Joseph Harrison, a fine young fellow distinguished for his assiduity, has just died." Our traditions of this sad incident are, that when Doctor Harris (or Harrison) was stricken with the deadly camp-fever he was removed to one of the smaller houses in the valley yonder, within the bounds of the community, where he was tenderly cared for by Brother Joannes Anguas, a widower and one of the Brotherhood. Doctor Harrison, notwithstanding the care and attention bestowed upon him, soon fell a victim to the dread disorder, and his body, according to well-founded tradition, now rests on Zion's Hill. Now, what was the sequel to this unselfish action of the old Ephrata mystic? He, too, was stricken with the fever, and in an old diary in my possession appears the following entry: "1778, March ye 4, departed this life, Brother James Anguas." He was but another of those brave heroes who fell a victim to his duty and patriotism.

Doctor Tilton further states that, to give him some idea of the great mortality at the hospitals of Ephrata and Bethlehem, one of the surgeons at the latter place asked him if he was acquainted with Colonel Gibson's fine Virginia Volunteer Regiment. He then went on to say that forty of them had come to his hospital, and then asked how many he supposed would ever rejoin their regiment. Dr. Tilton guessed a third or fourth part of the whole number. The surgeon thereupon solemnly declared that not even three would ever return, as

that number was all that remained alive, and of these one had returned to his regiment, another was convalescent and might possibly recover, but the only remaining one was then in the last stages of the colliquative flux and must die. Doctor Tilton, in conclusion, states that "many similar melancholy instances might be adduced while the hospital was at Ephrata."

In addition to the great personal risks run and sacrifices made by the different individuals who composed the Ephrata community, almost everything was taken from the society upon requisition of the quartermaster sergeants, who came around with surprising regularity. The paper and books in the printing office were taken to make cartridges, and so great was the demand for paper that upon subsequent visits even the hymn and prayer books were taken from the Saal. The quilts and blankets in the Sister House were seized for the convalescent soldiers, and the stores of grain were sent to replenish the commissary department of the main army while upon the bleak hills of Valley Forge.

For all this property that was taken or destroyed, as a matter of fact, both Zion and Kedar, on account of the infection, had to be demolished after they ceased to be hospitals.

For the vast amount of stores given and taken, for the personal sacrifices made, the services and medicines furnished, and the burial of the dead, not a single shilling was ever asked or received by the Ephrata Community, so far as I know, from either the government of the State or Nation.

Was there ever a greater instance of patriotism shown during the whole course of our country's history than that instanced in the action of the Brothers and Sisters of the Ephrata Community during the trying period of the Revolution?

Just how many of these heroes and patriots succumbed in the performance of their self-imposed duty, or who became invalids for the rest of their lives, may never be known. After much labor and time spent during the past ten years in research into the history of this community, I have been able to compile the following partial list of members who died during the occupation of Kedar and Zion for hospital purposes:

Brother Martin Funk, the younger, October 5. 1777; Brother Johann Bentz; Sister Margaretha; Brother Johannes Koch; Brother Casper Walter, the younger.

1778—Sister Anna Maria Huber, January 19 ; Widow Gertraut Melinger, February 3 ; Henrich Miller, who kept the tavern, January 12 ; Brother Adam Kimmel, January 27 ; Brother Joannes Angues, March 4.

To these names must be added those of John Bear and his wife, who voluntarily entered the hospital and nursed the sick. John Bear was a Mennonite preacher. They both caught the infection and died. The wife died March 20, 1778, and her husband on the 15th of April following. It is a noteworthy fact that no other instance is known in the whole history of the military hospitals in Pennsylvania during the Revolutionary war where the necessities were so great as to require the assistance of members of the general community.

We cannot even tell whether these humble heroes rest here upon Zion Hill or in the old God's acre by the roadside. However, no matter where they found a resting-place, it was their services, together with such of the Brethren and Sisters as survived, that made this spot "holy ground"—I may say holy in a double sense: First, as it is the resting-place of the patriots who gave their life for their country's independence; secondly, as it was sanctified by a religious community who never lost sight of their duty to God or their fellow-man.

Returning once more to the Revolutionary period, what grander figure in civil life have we in the whole history of the struggle, or that stands out in brighter relief, than that of Peter Miller? As Brother Jaebetz he was Prior of the Community, and about the time of his elevation to this position was honored with membership by the American Philosophical Society.

Have any of you, fellow members of the patriotic societies, ever considered the great services rendered to the cause of freedom by this single individual. How few persons are aware that plain Brother Jaebetz was the trusted agent of Congress and of Washington, so far as the translations of the diplomatic correspondence went? It was Prior Jaebetz who is credited with the translation of the Declaration of Independence into seven different tongues. Have any of you ever considered the importance of this task, and what depended upon the outcome of the work; what weighty consequences hinged upon its correct rendition of every word, and the construction

of a single sentence? If not, I will tell you. It meant either a possible approval or the rejection of the whole American cause of liberty by the foreign goveruments to which Congress and Washington were then looking for succor and pecuniary assistance to maintain the struggle against the great odds which they had to contend with.

Prior Jaebetz was the only competent person for this important work, in whom Congress could place implicit faith and confidence.

The very existence of this great Union shows us that the trust was not misplaced. Now, what pay or remuneration did this devout recluse ask or receive for his patriotic services? Not a single penny; no, not even a vote of thanks from Congress. He did not do the work for money, nor in the hope of fee and reward. It is but another illustration of the patriotism of the German non-combatant, exhibited during the Revolutionary struggle.

A year ago, at the celebration of Patriot's Day, the orator of the day, A. F. Hostetter, Esq., made use of the following language: "With the exception of Captain McDonald, we do not even know the names of a single soldier buried here, and neither whence they came nor the day of their death. All records concerning them seem to have been either lost or destroyed. I repeat the hope expressed on this spot fifty-one years ago by the eloquent orator of that day, but thus far not realized, that the publicity given by such exercises as these may result in bringing to light some trace of them. Much more than idle curiosity

would be gratified could this knowledge be obtained. In all probability, however, we shall never know their names."

Thus far no trustworthy records were kno . n to exist which would give any account of the Ephrata Military Hospital on Mount Zion, and the names of either the convalescents, or of such as here repose in their tents of clay under the sod.

It is now my privilege and great pleasure that I am enabled to announce to you, my fellow citizens, that some of the long lost official records have lately been located and found, some of which, unfortunately, show that Michael Widman was not the only person whose loyalty was suspected, for they seriously affect the patriotism of one of the married members of the Secular Community here and stand out in marked contrast to the patriotism, loyalty and devotion of the Prior Jaebetz and the other men and women who composed the settlement.

These documents are nothing less than the official reports of Major Albert Chapman, Military Commandant and Inspector at Ephrata, together with the official medical returns of Dr. William Brown, Physician General of Hospital at Ephrata, and at Lititz after its establishment there December 14, 1777; Dr. Moses Scott, Senior Surgeon in charge at Ephrata, and Dr. Ebenezer Smith, Second Surgeon.

Captain John Scott, Commissary of the Hospital, and others who were in charge of the Ephrata Military Hospitals for 1777–8, together with some contemporaneous accounts descriptive of the sufferings of the inmates, which were written by Dr. Moses Scott, and dated at the Hospital on Mount Zion. Copies of all

these interesting accounts and invaluable records will soon be in the possession of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, and copious extracts will be published in the *Pennsylvania Magazine* in the near future.

It is unnecessary for me to say anything about the importance of this find, as it must be apparent to you all, nor do I wish to anticipate the action of the Historical Society, but I will say that the discovery of these documents is largely due to the energy and labors of Mr. John W. Jordan. From these records we shall be able to gather some insight into the sufferings and trials of the soldiers who wrested this great country from the grasp of Great Britain, and I trust that the mere fact of the existence of these doctments may inspire addi tional vigor in the hearts of every patriotic resident, old and new, of this historic locality, to continue his individual efforts to bring this noble monument to completion; a monument that will not only record the brave deeds of the sleeping patriots, but will also mark the heroism and unselfish sacrifices of the theosophic community which once was dominant over these hills and vales; a monument that will not only be for those of the past, but whose existence will reflect the honor of the present generation, who are instrumental in bringing it to a successful completion. Firmly planted upon Mt. Zion, let it rear its proud shaft aloft in the air, a patriotic landmark to instruct future generations of the deeds of their forefathers.

It will remain for ages after yonder buildings have crumbled into dust, when

no vestige of the former Community remains in the valley of the Cocalico. It will then be the only local memento to keep alive the traditions of the past, and form a connecting link between the Ephrata of the future and the Ephrata of long ago, telling our children's children how the story of the Good Samaritan of old was repeated here during the "fatal year" of the Revolution, day after day, by the religious men and women of German birth, who settled here when the land was yet a wilderness, to put into practice the theories of a true Theosophic and pietistic life, whose history to the present day challenges the admiration of the student and rebukes the atheist and scoffer.

When the opposition of the Colonies to the mother government first dawned, and it was still a question with the ardent lovers of liberty, whether any protracted struggle could be maintained against England with all her great resources, a rude woodcut appeared in a Philadelphia paper. It represented a rattlesnake cut into pieces, with the name of a Colony over each section. Below was the motto, "Unite or die." The Colonies did unite, and we all know the result: the greatest nation on earth, whose flag is the glorious Stars and Stripes. What was true then is true now—"In union there is strength." Let me, therefore, express the hope that when we assemble here on "Patriots' Day," twelve months hence, it will be to celebrate the dedication of the completed monument. To do this will require the united effort of you all and the earnest support of your committee. Strengthen

their hands, aid them and assist them in their laudable undertaking. It can be done, and will be done, but only by a united effort. Remember the old watch-word, "In union there is strength," and when the memorial is unveiled to the gaze of the multitude, the world will agree with us that this sacred spot on Zion Hill is indeed "holy ground."